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1. origin of the west, klebi dyu
2. origin of the east, koro dyu
3. origin of the north, baba dyu
4. origin of the south, bani dyu
5. the sky from above, sã̃ kaba

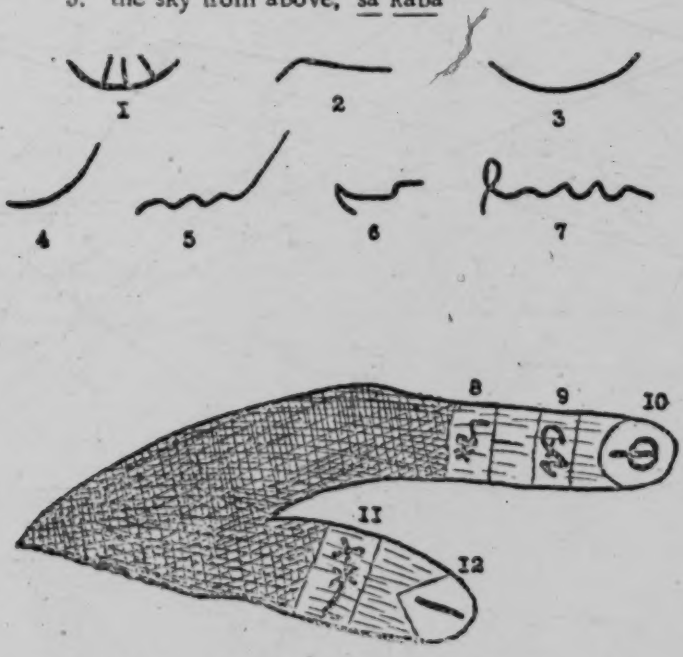


Fig. 1.—Bambara signs. From 1 to 7, signs of yo. From 8 to 12, signs of the king's thumb and index finger, representing the actual world and the future world (drawings by an informant).

6. secret space, tyema gundo
7. earth, dugu
8. center of the earth, kotye dugu
9. eye of the earth, dugu nye
10. mouth of the earth, dugu da (1)

[823]

1. The earth breathes through orifices called "mouths."

11. northwest, seleke se /8/ (literally: foot of the angle)

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is interesting in that it accentuates the ties which, in the Sudan, bind the Faro of the Bambara and the Bozo, the Nommo of the Dogon, and the blacksmiths. See M. Griaule, Dieu d'eau (passim).

772 helped the spirit with ten of its elements and with the radiance from
773 fa to build the sky along an oriented trajectory. Faro first went to the west, then the south, the east, and the north, thus determining the celestial cardinal points.

/14/ The sky is distinct from empty space, kene, which separates it from the earth and which is the product of the "yereyereli's shedding after it had given birth to the spirit." The sky, composed of seven parts placed one above the other, was completed before the earth which itself is also made up of seven corresponding parts.

773 Although he had received the larger share of the elements disgorged by the spirit, Pemba could not finish his work alone. When the sky was completed, the spirit blessed Faro, precipitated him in the form of water along the trajectory followed by Pemba during his descent. This water fell drop by drop from the seventh part of the sky to the seventh part of the earth into which it streamed to gain knowledge of the earth's foundations. As Faro descended vertically, he left a globule in space which became the spirit of the air, Teliko (1); on earth, he

1. From teli, to go quickly.

deposited a particle which formed the spirit Soba (2). As he dripped

2. Literally: so, house, ba, big.

between the mounds which made up the earth, he saw that the latter was not completed, so he filled the empty pockets with water, thus forming the hidden springs of today.

Then life appeared on earth. Faro, impregnated by the vibration which was potentially masculine and feminine, gave birth to twin daughters on a deserted hillock (3). As soon as they appeared, the

• [823]

3. Naked hillocks, walawala, and clearings are the scene of rituals concerning the twins.

773 Empty space, or tyema, which separates the sky from the earth, remains under the domination of Téliko. It is the domain of air, the winds and insects.

773 823 The earth is divided into seven parts which correspond to the seven heavens and are as follows: (1) dugukolo, earth; (2) dugukolo fi, black earth; (3) dugukolo dye, white earth; (4) dugukolo mana, shedding of the earth; (5) dugukolo bele, "stone of the earth"; (6) dugukolo noro, soft earth; (7) dugukolo wolofla, the seventh earth.

On earth, Faro first created deep watery holes, the abysses of the sea and the rivers which he haunts. He himself dug the first well, the ponds, and the bed of torrents. He established the schedule of the rains which fall from the seventh part of heaven to the seventh part of the earth and constitute the purification and reparation of cosmic disorders.

773 825 824 He then classified living beings. In the east, wild and domestic animals, each group headed respectively by the lion and the horse; in the west, the birds; in the north, the fish with the miri (1) at their

1. Micralestes acutidens.

head, the sauria, and the batrachia; in the south, all plant life which he divided into three categories (2), indicating the purifying and

2. These are respectively: herbs, bin, headed by the narakata (Digitaria digitata); plants, fura, the first being the sindya (Cassia siberiana), and trees, dyiri, divided into three categories headed respectively by the karite, the baobab, and the nere (Parkia biglobosa).

medicinal power of each.

773 Men were also named and classified and the races distributed according to the quality of the blood into which Faro inscribed the destiny of each. He determined the castes, beginning with the slaves.

He then decided each one's foods and, to protect /30/ the species from destruction, he indicated the forbidden foods, animal and vegetable, which each category of beings had to respect.

776 821 The second, dyi ble "red water," is Faro's copper, a reflection of koblenkaba or "red sky." It is similarly the seat of the spirit's warlike or punitive activities. Water of wrath and vengeful action, it drowns the guilty. Through it, Faro strikes the bodies and health of those who do not recognize his dominion.

Faro prefers to sojourn in the dyi fi, "black water," where he keeps his secrets. It is to this water that one prays to seek grace. It is from the dyi fi that the twelve future waters will flow.

Calm and felicity reign in the dyi sumane, "cold water," where the fish live. The dya of earthly bwings are preserved in it.

While Faro drowns those he punishes in the dyi ble, it is in the madũ (literally, person, to eat) that their bodies rot or become the prey of fish.

The sixth category of water, kosira (literally, thing of fear) is a jail. In it Faro temporarily places all that comes under his domination.

The seventh water, dyi wolõflã, corresponds to the seventh heaven.

776 823 782 In the Niger, the places inhabited by Faro bear the general name of faro tyin. These are mostly deep depressions, well known to the shore dwellers, particularly the Bozo. /46/ Sometimes a consecrated stone, placed on the shore, receives the sacrifices offered to the spirit.

The most celebrated is a place called Souko, located upstream from Koulikoro near the village of Kayo. The local spirit engendered all that now lives in the river. Because of this he is worshipped by all Bozo and Somono fishermen, who used to send delegations to the annual sacrifice that took place during the dry season.

776 823 The Faro of Ségou lives in the Faka, a deep hole located close to the right bank, facing the town. Legend has it that the Faka is extended by tunnels: one links the river to the Bani while the other opens out at Dya and was used by the founders of the settlement in mythical times.

[825] The Faka is placed under the guardianship of a crocodile to which each year the inhabitants offered victims. At the bottom of the hole there is a fat blind scaleless polyo, which the fishermen always return to the water if they catch it in their nets "because it is Faro's gate-keeper." In olden times, a flat stone upon which were traced a representation of Faro and black dots equal in number to the inhabitants of Ségou was visible in the deepest part of the waters. On [782] this occasion an albino was sacrificed (by slitting his throat) and the first fruits of the harvest were offered to the spirit.

776 On market day, a gourd filled with river water, called fle ndinye
•823 faro, is placed close to the shore where the canoes land. To drink a
782 mouthful of this water is equivalent to a sacrifice to the spirit. The drinker gives a cowrie as alms to the beggar who drew the water, for "never can [Faro's] water be bought or sold" (1).

1. Ma ti dyi fere ma ti dyi sã̃.
See pl. II, b.

At Sama, the faro tyin is a kind of natural corridor located amidst the rocks bordering and overhanging the left bank of the river.
[825] The finches nesting there warn the boatmen of the place's sanctity by flying off; the boatmen then stop to pray. In passing, they throw an offering and those who have broken taboos purify themselves by washing. Each shows the spirit all that he carries with him. Two nearby trees, faro sõ̃ndyiri or "trees of Faro's sacrifice," are used to tie up the white bulls at twilight. The following day, they are thrown alive into the river with millet mash and cola nuts. At the bottom of the passage, on a fairly smooth surface, the image of Faro described above was drawn each year in the course of the ceremony celebrated by the society of the Komo.

/47/ Faro also haunts ponds and wells. In the village of Nango a natural well was revealed to a hunter by a white ram which appeared out of a thicket. The village was built after the discovery of the water hole where the inhabitants now worship the spirit.

In the village of Siyango, the water of the well in which Faro resides is tabooed, the site of the well being the seat of all the religious ceremonies of the villagers. There the newborn are presented, and deaths and marriages announced. The sick are treated by being
[755] made to drink the well water and wash in it. From his herd, each person offers every year an animal which is thrown alive into the pit.
[681] Finally, those condemned to death are executed by drowning in the same spot.

## Faro's Auxiliaries

776 Faro has placed spirits as his representatives in the skies, in space,
773 on earth, in the trees, and in the rocks of the mountains. They see

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7. Only vegetables whose spiritual essence does not have to be preserved are cooked, "for to cook is to shatter the soul."

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In each village are grown one or several small fields of tomatoes, called "Faro's fields," or "fields of twins." The fruits of these fields are reserved for the worship of the spirit (1).

1. On the site of the ancient village of Soroba, at the edge of a pond located near the present-day village, there are two rectangular fields of tomatoes dedicated to male twins and four square fields dedicated to female twins in the village. Each year the villagers gather at the edge of the pond for a ceremony. The symbolic words relating to twins are recited and a prayer is said, to be followed by ablutions.

The fruit that is harvested is offered to the spirit by squashing it on a neighboring tree trunk.

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/49/ All metals belong to Faro. The seven /sic/ principal metals are the following: copper (male), brass (female), gold, silver, tin, and iron. Copper and brass come from the fifth sky (koblenkaba). They descend at each thunderclap and, along with the "thunderstones," penetrated into the soil. They were discovered by a diviner at the bottom of a pond that had dried up because of a broken taboo. Because of their divine origin, copper and brass represent "Faro's sounds." [301] These sounds twist themselves around the spiralled copper or brass earrings that everyone wears and penetrate the eardrum, thus making it possible to hear words. Gold plays a part in the building of certain altars (boli) to which it confers strength and stability.

The sacrifices made with or on copper, brass, or gold have a restraining influence on the spirit for they are of his own essence.

No woman wearing copper, brass, or gold jewelry, may cross the Niger without opening her luggage out of deference to the spirit, for "all ornaments belong to him and often must be returned to him after death.

[784] It is taboo to bring metal into contact with cow's butter, an oily substance that does not allow water to penetrate.

Ba 776 436 Legend has it that cowrie shells, widespread throughout Black Africa and used as money, come from the deep water where Faro keeps his fortune. Faro "sleeps on a bed of cowrie." Their mythical origin explains their role and both the economic and religious value attributed to them.

Ba 776 823 The black earth of the river banks, bogo fi, such as that found on the sea shore in sandy places, contains the strength of the spirit and is used in numerous rites. Smeared at the base of the interior walls of the huts, it symbolizes Faro's presence in the bosom of the family. It serves to decorate the headdress of the circumcised (1). Those who

1. See p. 233, Fig. 14.

live far from the Niger or from any source of water pray to it as if addressing Faro.

Ba 776 173 Some men occupy a privileged position in their relationship with the spirit. The first are the eight mythical ancestors, the eldest of whom is Koumabana. They received the word of the spirit, transmitted it to their descendants, explained before dying the new order of things, and instituted the cult.

At present they are still venerated as the prototypes of /50/ the human being in his new environment. Along with immortality, man lost the heavenly food which, until then, had been sufficient to nourish him. The articulated limbs which were provided for him dedicated him to manual labor, the techniques of which were taught him little by little. On the other hand, in the spiritual domain a deep change also occurred. In primitive times, man lived an almost animal existence and was without any responsibility. His abandonment by the balanza brought him suffering and death, but with them, his consciousness, symbolized by Faro's "word," developed. Along with death, illness, sorrow, bad instincts and the hard daily labor, there appeared also man's feeling about his own person and his place in an ordered universe, governed by Faro, as opposed to primitive chaos.

The eight ancestors taught men to venerate Faro, to ask him for all they needed, and to thank him for all they received. Therefore their names are invoked in most prayers and the episodes of their lives are told to the young to whom their works are held up as an example.

Bo 776 773 Mention should also be made here of the special position held by the Bozo who were born to the mythical girl twins, daughters of Faro (2).

826 immortal with smooth limbs, he became mortal and hard working. As seats of the male semen, they transmit this condition to the embryo, formed in the maternal womb by Faro. The weariness felt in the limbs after the sexual act is proof of this transmission. As Locus of [859] the virile semen, framework of the man, and a mechanism suitable for physical labor, the articulations are also the symbol of society. The chief's throne, in the shape of a knee, is the image of its owner's articulated body as well as that of the armature of the social body and of the grouping of individuals under his jurisdiction (1).

1. See p. 178.

826 823 201 The limbs represent the right and the left. Rectitude, firmness, and directed action are "right"; incertitude, the spirit of indecision, and inconsistency in behavior are "left." The right is male and symbolizes man's labor; the other is female. All gestures, profane and religious, and all representations of objects bear witness to this. Performing his first task in the fields before the rain, the farmer gives three blows with his hoe held in his left hand in order to absorb the impurity of the earth. After this, he works until the harvest with his right hand. To cross one's hands means supplication, to put them behind one's back means humiliation.

826 201 576 Each finger has its value. The little finger, bolokoni lakare, is "the son of the other fingers" and in it is concealed the entire strength of the hand; it "carries the nyama of the fingers." Hence its use as a measure of divinations. To point to someone with one's little finger means to belittle him with respect to those present. Thus one casts a spell (korti) against an enemy or an undesirable person with the little finger.

826 622 The index finger and the thumb of a chief, formerly those of a king, are marked on certain occasions with signs called bolo ti doniya, "knowledge of the signs of the hand." On the index are drawn three "acts of the world today" (bi dyẽ walew) and on the thumb, two "things of the interior of the secret world" (dyẽ gundo kono fẽw), for it is said that "the knowledge of the signs of the hand /70/ is the road of the creation 5, the index is the world in 3 and the thumb is the new world" (1). The whole represents the worlds thought out by

794 Each year a sacrifice bringing together all the inhabitants is offered
776 to the dasiri and is terminated by communal eating of the sacrificial
782 victim. The first fruits of the harvest are also brought to it by the sacrificer.

B. The dangu

776 The crossroads dangu or danku (literally, boundary of the head) are
778 inhabited by the Soba spirits who, under Faro, constantly intervene
823 in human affairs. Everything placed at this spot belongs to them,
783 and no one passes by without leaving an offering or a token of his presence: a tool, raw cotton, seeds, cloth. A travelling stranger kneels and deposits a little ash or some cotton; if not, he cleans off a little space on which he spits before leaving. A child passing by will greet it with these words: "Crossroads, my soul is in your hands." On the occasion of any event concerning the individual, the family, or the community, red kola nuts are placed at the crossroads and the following words uttered: "You, crossroads, I entrust my head to you; you are my support; I say, you, crossroads" (1).

1. E dangu m be ni ku kalifa, do i la ni jigi be fe, ngo e dangu.

The corssroad, as an ideal public thoroughfare, is the chosen spot where one easily rids oneself of the nyama which any individual keeps and carries about with him. All that is impure, unlucky, and undesirable for the individual or the community is left at the crossroads. Objects which have belonged to dead people are also left there. The forces which are thus gotten rid of are supposedly absorbed by the spirits for whom they constitute a kind of nourishment which will then be returned to men in the form of gifts free of any taint. (2)

2. See p, 258.

/140/ Several examples will illustrate the role played by the crossroads in the community:

Any man who has wounded an animal or squashed an insect is affected in his own tere by that of the victim. He goes to the crossroads, kneels, and prays, depositing at the same time a band of cotton, an egg, and ashes. The band of woven cotton, symbol of

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the word, is offered as clothing, and the eggs are offered as purification. As for the ashes, it is the ideal pure element since fire has "removed" its tere from the wood; here it represents the man from whom "the bad force acting on his tere has been removed" (1). Whoever murders an

1. See pp. 90 ff.

animal proceeds in the samw way with the animal's hide upon which he throws cowrie shells. In both cases, the spirits absorb the tere and nyama, which add to their own forces and free the culprit.

Collective purifications are carried out on the dangu when sexual taboos regarding cultivated fields and bush are broken. The impurity [833] resulting from copulation performed outdoors is communicated to all the land belonging to the village; the trees in the bush will no longer bear fruit; the harvests will deteriorate. Formerly the two lovers [684] taken by surprise were deprived of their clothing which was burned on the dangu after they had circled the village three times starting at the left. The culprits were then banished. At present, if the plight of the fields suggests that such an act has been committed, all varieties of cultivated seeds are gathered in a basket which is placed at the cross-roads. Then, all the villagers and their domestic animals circle the village three times while sham battles take place between men mounted on horseback. After a sacrifice offered at the dangu, the seeds, thus purified, are sown.

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Offerings are made to the spirits of the crossroads at the time of sowing to invoke their protection. This ritual is obligatory for whomever sows cotton, since this seed was given to men by these spirits. The farmer places the seeds, sits down facing west, and cries out three times the name of the dangu above the seeds. He leaves three small piles in homage to the spirit along with fibers from the plant, and kills a victim before proceeding to sow his field. When the stalks are up, he cuts some boughs and returns to the place of sacrifice to sweep up the seeds, thus impregnating them with the nyama of the dangu. He then dries them, grinds, sifts, and mixes them with earth picked up on the same spot. In his field, he shouts /141/ the name of the dangu and throws the mixture with all his strength in the direction of the cardinal points, the zenith, and the ground. When the plants are mature he picks the first seven ripe seeds, brings them to the same place, and offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

It is also at the crossroads that the elders place the child whose legitimacy is in doubt. If the diviner who is then consulted declares that the child is a bastard, he is deprived of the protection of the spirits and is supposedly unable to survive the nyama which he has acquired at the place. In this same spot are buried abnormal children, in particular hydrocephalics who are considered undesirable. The spindle of a dead woman is placed here along with the broom she habitually used.

But the ritual most characteristic of the crossroads is the one resorted to by the village when it is in trouble: the primitive wooden mallet, gosilande is planted in the ground; it is then struck with a stalk of millet to chase away evil and to induce new techniques of reparation to come out of the instrument (1).

1. See p. 145.

C. Stone Altars

In the villages, at the intersections of lanes, and in the squares, the founding ancestors are represented by stones under which various objects are buried (see Pl. V, b).

At Sama, four large stones, encased in a clay platform, symbolize both the cardinal points and the ancestors. They are in touch with the dasiri and receive the same offerings. At Banankoroni, the fara ba is partly buried. Under its point is an albino skull which represents those of the first ancestors and their bones. Two hoes, one placed near the right ear and the other near the left ear, convey the idea that "the man who cultivates the earth will never hear a humiliating word." Under the chin, another hoe recalls that the villagers who are faithful to agriculture will never know famine. Under the hoe, a siriku (2) protects them against those who try to harm them, and brings them

2. See p. 179, n. 1.

"the hyena's luck"; it also means that some of their ancestors were transformed into hyenas in former times. A circumcision knife recalls that all males are circumcised, and all women excised (Fig. 15). Finally, three albino bones and a small pile of copper are a testimony to /142/ Faro's presence and power. Drawings are made on these

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often contain ingredients which have been pulverized: wood dust, charcoal powder, even powder of precious metals. Our investigation has not yet allowed us to clarify the role of this pulverization process. However, its mention by the Bambara and the frequent use of korti indicate the importance attached to this type of preparation.

/148/ Outside the hut, at the height of the nyama boli, a hook holds up the clothes of those who are killed by the Komo. The sanctuary, as well as the clothing of the mask, is daubed with black earth taken on the shore of the river representing Faro, and covered with feathers of the same color. Generally speaking, the metal [823] contained in the Komo altars gives it its strength and life. The most powerful of these is gold, silver comes next, then copper. Since each person gives an offering according to his means, the power of the altar thus depends in a certain measure on the wealth of the members of the society.

[782] Regular sacrifices upon the stakes, the bases of which sometimes contain a little wood from the historic canoe of Makanta Djigui, permit them to "maintain the pressure, the life" in the various altars. These altars are removed from the sanctuary only upon the occasion of funerals or agricultural rites. When the mask is removed and when there are dances, replicas commonly found in the home of the chief are sometimes used instead.

The pembele is the protector of the society, the container of the forces (nyama) of the group. It is rarely placed in the sanctuary and usually kept by the chief who never exhibits it; occasionally it is watered with rain water symbolizing the work of creation.

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Before the annual ceremony called "anniversary of the Komo," drawings are made on the sanctuary by the chief or an elder; they are a reminder that the sanctuary is the link between the invisible powers and the members of the society. Besides the image of creation as an issue of the initial vibration (see Fig. 2), the head of the ancestor Koumabana, figurations of the twins, and the twenty-two fundamental signs are sometimes drawn. Finally hoes emphasize the agricultural function of the Komo (1). Granaries intended for conserving grains

1. At the time when the attention of specialists is attracted by the division of

794 532 3. Koli means nail or spur in reference to a rooster and, by extension, hook.

impregnated with black earth from the river and made of copper, Faro's metal, soaked in the venom of a viper before the hook was formed. These hooks are also annually soaked in red venom mixed with pepper. All these preparations make them dangerous weapons used for different purposes during the ceremonies.

The right hook (kinin koli) is used to kill the guilty ones or the undesirables. A slight would brings about death which is then attributed to Faro. The left hook defends members of the society against the dangers which are present, even for them, in the actions and emanations of the right hook. It contains two shards of black pottery, Faro's taboo, which keep away and thus diminish the latter's power. During the dance the Komo, wishing to protect one of the members under its jurisdiction, waves the left arm over him to attenuate the strength of the right. During funerals a gesture of the left hook will indicate the deceased's membership in the society and will assure him protection in the hereafter.

784 823 The taboo of the copper hooks is the same as Faro's concerning this metal. Just as no one would cross the Niger wearing an object or an ornament of copper, similarly no one would wear copper in attending the Komo ceremonies.

The wearing of the mask, which is much sought after by several initiates at each ceremony, is assigned to one of them by the chief. This role involves risks which are diminished by certain precautions such as abstention from sexual relations before the ceremony. On the day of the ceremony, the elders make the wearer drink millet beer until he is completely inebriated; then for a moment they apply to his chin and abdomen the nyama boli which he will carry in a bag during the ceremony. He also puts on a ritual headdress which sometimes has incorporated in it a particle of the one belonging to the famous Soma Moriba Sidibé. The mask is then adjusted on his head, the flute slipped between his teeth, while the chief assures him of his good faith and proves to him that he runs no danger.

/152/ D. Musical Instruments

794 534 The emergence of the Komo is accompanied by rhythms played on drums, dyiri kolo (literally, bone, wood), made of hides stretched

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terms the same meaning of supernatural forces.

again in the chapter on brotherhoods.

[126] Spirits, genii and gods (1) known to the Bambara

1. See on p. 123 the tradition about the horse Kori who was the husband of a mabo woman.

may be divided into three classes:

First, manes who have become spirits. These are of ten wandering and ill-disposed spirits. That is why the word nyama, to which we have alluded, is often used in a pejorative sense. It is also perhaps believed -- by analogy again -- that some manes can become so perfect in evil that they become true evil spirits, just as others become, if not actually good spirits, at least indifferent ones.

A second category comprises genii of the place or gods of the earth (nyana dugu-da-siri). There is not a single spot that [823] is inhabited, cultivated, populated or, on the other hand, isolated and deserted that does not have its genie. However, only some of these genii have an organized cult. They are usually the protectors of those who inhabit, cultivate, frequent or visit the places in question, provided that they are suitably honored. They often reveal their presence by entering into direct relations with someone who is in their vicinity and telling him how they wish to be honored in exchange for protection (2); on other occasions they are only discovered by a "seer." In any event, the genie of a place has complete possession of whatever is in the place, and man can profit in one way or another only in accordance with his pact with the genie. In principle he has only a simple right of usufruct, different from and more extensive than our right.

2. See the story about the genie who revealed himself to Kolé (p. 51).

776 definition fits closely with what we have said about the gnéna, and the
782 worship of these genii is indeed animism and not idolatry. And since, according to Burton, fetishism is less adoration than a propitiation of animate or inanimate objects to which a mysterious power is attributed, the sacrifices and saraka offered by the Bambara to their genii are acts of propitiation rather than of worship.

776 To give the reader a more precise notion of the worship of the gnéna -- and they are legion -- I will divide the powerful ones, those of the third group, into eight categories: the genii of ponds, springs, and wells; the genii of the crops; those who protect children; and those who protect circumcised youths; the genii of the women, that of twins; the dasiri, protector of villages; and the koté or kouéré, a special genie of a semioccult sect. All these genii have their priests, their sacrifices, and their saraka, but since all are not equal in strength and power, the extensiveness and formality of worship is not the same with respect to all. /90/

4. Genie of Ponds, Springs, and Wells

776 There are genii splashing around in all ponds, springs, and wells,
782 and our Negroes think that in order to obtain their good graces they
● 823 are obliged from time to time to offer them a trickle of /millet/ flour and water, the blood of a white hen, or a mouthful of chewed kola nut. On the edge of a well, at the mouth of a spring, on the edge of a pond, and finally on the banks of a river, offerings, sacrifices, and saraka are made, and their purpose is to prevent our Kneippist genii from escaping. If they leave displeased they take with them the water without which people cannot live, and the spring dries. There is total drought, a terrible misfortune -- for what can become of them without water!

The sacrificer to the water genii is quite often the head of the family on whose land the spring is located. Usually this honor goes by right to the head of the quarter; there are even villages where the sacrificer is none other than the religious head of the village, the gnéna-n-sonnoba /sic/, who is priest of the dasiri, the genie protector of the village.

776 Most frequently these genii are given saraka, but a hen is sacri-
782 ficed each time the wells are cleaned: it is in good taste to do so,
● 823 and few villages depart from the rule. Once a year a public sacrifice is offered to them, with a degree of formality that varies according to whether the sacrificer is merely the head of a family, the head of a quarter, or the head of the village. Since the women spend a good half of their lives around the wells, they are almost everywhere the ones who provide the materials for the sacrifice.

5. Genii of the Crops

776 When planting time comes, the Bambara, who are farmers above
241 all, blossom out with sacrifices and redden just about everything with
782 blood. The head of the family does not forget the genie of the seed. He offers it a saraka at home and sometimes a sacrifice, and unless he is very old and helpless he appears at the field on the day when the first pinch of seed is consigned to the earth. Before /91/ the /sowing/ is begun a hen's blood must be offered to the genie of fertility, which is responsible for watching over the seed and causing it to sprout and grow, and it is he that makes this offering, unless he has delegated this duty to his eldest son or his brother (the one next after him in seniority).

The departure for the field at planting time has its own unique characteristics. A child (if there is one in the family, obviously) is given the gourd (1) containing the seed, and in the name of the genie

1. A pumpkin cut in two, emptied and dried in the sun.

the father gives him orders and admonitions. On the way out of the hut the child pays his respects to the shades of his ancestors by placing the gourd on the threshold, and leaves quickly, proud as Artaban. He must be careful not to stop on the way unless he has to, and, above all, he must keep silent so that the spirits that fly here, there, and everywhere remain ignorant of what he is carrying and cannot attack the seeds in the millet grain. Anyone who talks runs a grave

Since all the Bambara could not be made to submit to shameful servitude, the Moslems were satisfied to impose a tax, to forbid public worship of the idols, and, with sheathed sword, sought to make converts by persuasion. Their caravans were quick to cover the country, preaching Islam in all places both favorable and unfavorable, but the mass of the people could not be approached. In order to give /131/ their beliefs a rational basis, they always did everything in the name of "Alla," "Stamboul" (the Sultan of Constantinople), and "Makka (Mecca), and said to the conqueror: "All true belief comes from Mecca (Makka); it is the center of all religious life, so why do you fight so hard against our boli? They all come from Mecca. God has given you the formula: 'there is no Divinity other than God and Mohammed is His prophet'; for you He prescribes ablutions, Friday rest, etc.. Keep your formula and shout it! To us Bambara He has given the boli and bloody sacrifices, so why do you want to take from us our treasures that are hungry for blood?" I do not doubt that we owe our "legend" to the discussions which arose between the m'rabet (the marabout, or Moslem priest) and the gnâtigi, or bolitigi. Here it is as I so often heard it told by bold old men:

A group of youths who were devoting themselves to trade and following lady luck (ou toumbe kolo (1) gnini, "they were seeking cowrie shells"), one day took the road to the east. Over mountains and valleys the little band walked and walked for a long time, and then finally they reached the great, blue, salty water, the ocean; on the shores of which lies the holy city, Mecca (Makka) (2).

1. Kolo, "cowrie shells" (singular, koké), small shells used as money.

2. Since the Moslems said that Mecca was located on the seacoast, and since the Bambara did not know Arabia, they believed it to be in this direction. In their minds the ocean does not have to be crossed to get there. Actually, this is the least of their worries.

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1. In the eyes of the Negroes this ceremony is not a bloodless sacrifice but a simple prayer; and the water is poured to give the words greater emphasis, since in their eyes it is the element without which nothing lives nor can live.

the wind blows from the west or the east, from the north or the south, may it be favorable to us. Give us a long life, many descendants, wives and prosperity." The audience answers, "Amina -- o dé ka ké (let it be so)," and, using hoes hafted in reverse so that the curve of the blade is on the outside, the youths fill the grave. The drums beat again, and the women clap their hands and improvise a song whose words usually can be reduced to these: "Our father is dead, we have been told he is dead. But he will come back! Young men, fill the grave well, so that no souba, no hyena, nor any wild animal can take away the corpse."

764 When the grave is filled, the one who is holding the strip of cloth attached to the blouse, or the shroud, of the deceased pulls it toward him until it tears and remains in his hands. This ribbon is a [751] precious relic of which tafo are made; they are a protection from a host of evils, especially throat ailments and gnâma. The coarse mat (tjékala or kara) which was the bed or the seat of the deceased, quite often together with his shoes and the small earthen pot that was his wash basin, are laid on the tomb. If the deceased was a woman, pieces of a gourd, fragments of a hearth, or the stick for stirring gruel (to-n-galama) are thrown onto the tomb instead of the wash basin. The pliant mat in which the corpse was wrapped is often given to a friend. The latter goes and burns it outside the village, or before entering his own village if he is a foreigner; he says: "Here is a mat on which no one will die from now on."

[777] Wednesday and Saturday are two unlucky days. On these days 764 strangers never present their condolences to the bereaved family, and if a burial takes place, a small white chicken is killed and given to 782 the deceased so that he can placate the spirits as soon as the grave